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DEMETER

AND OTHER POEMS





D E M E T E R

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

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London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1889

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1889

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ERRATA.

- p. 4, line 6, *for* The was, *read* the Was  
p. 117, line 6, *for* one *read* our  
p. 150, line 9, *for* More than *read* Than



TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN  
AND AVA.

I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and rash ;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

III.

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV.

But since your name will grow with Time,  
Not all, as honouring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the name  
A golden portal to my rhyme :

V.

But more, that you and yours may know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.



VI.

For he—your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you—  
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII.

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening year,  
Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

VIII.

Who might have chased and claspt Renown  
And caught her chaplet here—and there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down ;

IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more ;

X.

And sacred is the latest word ;  
And now The was, the Might-have-been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI.

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell  
Fell and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII.

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

XIII.

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

I.

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the sceptre.

II.

She beloved for a kindness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem

Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III.

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly.

IV.

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude

Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

v.

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queenhood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest !

vi.

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,  
Make their neighbourhood healthfuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,

Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII.

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty summers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

VIII.

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,

Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce !  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science !  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire !

X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,



You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing ' Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee !'

XI

Are there thunders moaning in the distance?  
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,  
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB,

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,

Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>

From out the Ghost of Pindar in you

Roll'd an Olympian ; and they say<sup>2</sup>

That here the torpid mummy wheat

Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet

As that which gilds the glebe of England,

Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

So may this legend for awhile,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
    Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

## DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE.

(IN ENNA.)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies  
All night across the darkness, and at dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,  
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb  
With passing thro' at once from state to state,  
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,  
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,  
Might break thro' clouded memories once again

On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song  
And welcome ; and a gleam as of the moon,  
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,  
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away  
That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone !  
Queen of the dead no more—my child ! Thine  
eyes

Again were human-godlike, and the Sun  
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,  
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—  
'Mother !' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd, eyes  
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes  
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power

Draw downward into Hades with his drift  
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon ;  
But when before have Gods or men beheld  
The Life that had descended re-arise,  
And lighted from above him by the Sun ?  
So mighty was the mother's childless cry,  
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven !

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls,  
All flowers—but for one black blur of earth  
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car  
Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee hence.  
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,  
I feel the deathless heart of motherhood

Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence  
The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,  
Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,  
And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-maned,  
Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom. No !  
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it ; all the space  
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,  
And breaks into the crocus-purple hour  
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,

I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
Yea, the cubb'd lioness ; went in search of thee  
Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave  
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
And set the mother waking in amaze

To find her sick one whole ; and forth again  
Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,  
‘Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?’  
And out from all the night an answer shrill’d,  
‘We know not, and we know not why we wail.’  
I climb’d on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
And ask’d the waves that moan about the world  
‘Where? do ye make your moaning for my child?’  
And round from all the world the voices came  
‘We know not, and we know not why we moan.’  
‘Where?’ and I stared from every eagle-peak,  
I thridded the black heart of all the woods,  
I peer’d thro’ tomb and cave, and in the storms  
Of Autumn swept across the city, and heard  
The murmur of their temples chanting me,  
Me, me, the desolate Mother! ‘Where?’—and  
turn’d,



And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,  
And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee,—  
The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
The scorpion crawling over naked skulls ;—  
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
Spring from his fallen God, but trace of thee  
I saw not ; and far on, and, following out  
A league of labyrinthine darkness, came  
On three gray heads beneath a gleaming rift.  
'Where'? and I heard one voice from all the three  
'We know not, for we spin the lives of men,  
And not of Gods, and know not why we spin !  
There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,  
Without his knowledge, from him flits to warn

A far-off friendship that he comes no more,  
So he, the God of dreams, who heard my cry,  
Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow past  
Before me, crying 'The Bright one in the highest  
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,  
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I, the child  
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the Power  
That lifts her buried life from gloom to bloom,  
Should be for ever and for evermore  
The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.

Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods of Heaven.  
I would not mingle with their feasts ; to me  
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the lips,  
Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.

The man, that only lives and loves an hour,  
Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.  
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my ravings hush'd  
The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd  
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine  
And golden grain, my gift to helpless man.  
Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-spears  
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the sun,  
Pale at my grief, drew down before his time  
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness, He  
Who still is highest, glancing from his height  
On earth a fruitless fallow, when he miss'd  
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise  
And prayer of men, decreed that thou should'st dwell  
For nine white moons of each whole year with me,  
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam of dawn  
Will see me by the landmark far away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk  
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content  
With them, who still are highest. Those gray  
heads,  
What meant they by their ' Fate beyond the Fates ' ?  
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us down,  
As we bore down the Gods before us ? Gods,  
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to stay,  
Not spread the plague, the famine ; Gods indeed,  
To send the noon into the night and break  
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven ?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,  
And all the Shadow die into the Light,

When thou shalt dwell the whole bright year with  
me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond their race,  
And made themselves as Gods against the fear  
Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast from men,  
As Queen of Death, that worship which is Fear,  
Henceforth, as having risen from out the dead,  
Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
From buried grain thro' springing blade, and bless  
Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,  
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of Earth  
The worship which is Love, and see no more  
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glimmering lawns  
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide  
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

## OWD ROÄ.<sup>1</sup>

NAÄY, noä mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin' 'im Roä,  
Roä, Roä,

Fo' the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind, 'e can neither  
stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge as 'appy as  
iver I can,

Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver owäd  
mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby, afoor thou  
was gotten too owd,

For 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was allus as  
good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt; 'e could  
howd<sup>3</sup> 'is oan,

An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when an' wheere to  
bury his boane.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an' 'e'd niver  
not down wi' 'is täail,

Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shäamed on, when  
we was i' Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that, Dick,  
when 'e cooms to be deäd,

I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort of a sar-  
vice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parliament man  
'at stans fur us 'ere,

An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e could but  
stan fur the Shere.

‘Faäithful an’ True’—them words be i’ Scriptur—  
 an’ Faäithful an’ True

Ull be fun’<sup>4</sup> upo’ four short legs ten times fur one  
 upo’ two.

An’ maäybe they’ll walk upo’ two but I knaws they  
 runs upo’ four,<sup>5</sup>—

Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha ’eärs it be  
 strikin’ the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o’ Roä when we lived i’  
 Howlaby Daäle,

Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun nobbut hev’  
 one glass of aäle.

Straänge an’ owd-farran’d<sup>6</sup> the ’ouse, an’ belt<sup>7</sup> long  
 afoor my daäy

Wi’ haäfe o’ the chimleys a-twizzen’d<sup>8</sup> an’ twined  
 like a band o’ haäy.



The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud coom at the  
fall o' the year,

An' saddle their ends upo stools to pictur the door-  
poorch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin' there o'  
the brokken stick ;<sup>9</sup>

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'<sup>10</sup> as graw'd hall  
ower the brick ;

An' there i' the 'ouse one night—but it's down,  
an' all on it now

Goan into mangles an' tonups,<sup>11</sup> an' raäved slick  
thruf by the plow—

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house, one night I  
wur sittin' aloän,

Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin still as a  
stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as this, an' the  
midders <sup>12</sup> as white,

An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi' the  
windle <sup>13</sup> that night ;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside Roäver, but I  
wur awaäke,

An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—Doänt maäke  
thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their songs an'  
'ed 'ed their beer,

An' 'ed goän their waäys ; ther was nobbut three,  
an' noän on 'em there.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst an' dussn't  
not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,

But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins <sup>14</sup> was nobbut a  
rat or a mouse.

An' I loökt out wonst<sup>15</sup> at the night, an' the daäle  
was all of a thaw,

Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a long black  
snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slushin' down  
fro' the bank to the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I feeäld it  
drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the good owd  
times 'at was goan,

An' the munney they maäde by the war, an' the  
times 'at was coomin' on ;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin' to let in  
furriners wheät,

Howiver was British farmers to stan' ageän o' their  
feeät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to paäy my  
men?

An' all along o' the feller<sup>16</sup> as turn'd 'is back of  
hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we couldn't  
ha' 'eärd tha call,

Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down, an'  
thy craädle an' all ;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha then 'ed  
gotten wer leäve,

Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause o' the  
Christmas Eäve ;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when Moother 'ed  
gotten to bed,

An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the Freeä  
Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I says to him

'Squire, ya're laäte,'

Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the Yule-

block theer i' the graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent to-night?'

an' I says to 'im 'Noä,'

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>17</sup> 'Then hout

to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma hout upo'

Christmas Eäve'?

Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver a-tuggin'

an' teärin' my slieäve.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>18</sup> fur I noäwaeyes

knew'd 'is intent ;

An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I fetcht 'im a

kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im, as if  
'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,

An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy chamber  
door wouldn't sneck ;<sup>19</sup>

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm hingin'  
down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' me  
wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I kick'd thy  
Moother istancead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house is afire,'  
she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the gell o'  
the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when there  
warn't not a mossel o' harm ;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur gawin' that  
waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell<sup>20</sup> was as howry a trollope as iver  
traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I offens 'ev  
tell'd 'er mysen,

Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was nobbut a-  
rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd ony-  
waäys let ma be good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair, an'  
screeäd like a Howl gone wud<sup>21</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>22</sup> Git oop, if ya're  
onywaäys good for owt.'

And I says 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not nowadaäys  
—good fur nowt—

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt<sup>23</sup> of all Nowts as 'ull  
hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I seed 'er  
a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld 'Ya mun saäve little Dick, an' be  
sharp about it an' all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets 'im ageän  
the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin, when I  
gits to the top,

But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till I feäld  
mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an' tellin' me  
not to be skeärd,

An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys as I  
wasn't afeärd;



But I couldn't see fur the smoäke wheere thou was  
a-liggin, my lad,

An' Roäver was there i' the chaumber a-yowlin' an'  
yaupin' like mad ;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-squeälin', as if  
tha was bit,

An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the merk's<sup>24</sup> o'  
thy shou'der yit ;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw I didn't  
hääfe think as 'e'd 'ear,

*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 'is  
mouth to the winder there !*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as soon as 'e  
'eärd 'is naäme,

Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at summun seed  
i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e promised  
a son to she,

An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i' säavin' a son  
fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says 'I mun gaw up  
ageän fur Roä.'

'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I tell'd 'er 'Yeäs  
I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an'  
clemm'd <sup>25</sup> owd Roä by the 'eäd,

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I taäked 'im  
at fust fur deäd ;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeäm'd as  
blind as a poop,

An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>26</sup> I couldn't  
wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the barn, fur  
the barn wouldn't burn

Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an' the wind  
wasn't like to turn.

An' *I* kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is taäil fur  
a bit,

But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all night, an'  
I 'ears 'em yit ;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and thou was  
a-squeälin' thysen,

An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin an' moänin'  
an' naggin' ageän ;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>27</sup> rummle  
down when the roof gev waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin' like  
judgment daäy.

Warm anew there sewer-ly, but the barn was as  
 cowl as owt,

An' we cuddled and huddled together, an' happt<sup>28</sup>  
 wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed beän sa  
 soäk'd wi' the thaw

'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that night, poor  
 soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the rigtree<sup>29</sup>  
 was tummlin' in—

Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall hower—an'  
 ten year sin ;

'Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I'll coom  
 an' I'll squench the light,

Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—and soa little  
 Dick, good-night.

## NOTES TO OWD ROÄ.

- 1 Old Rover.
- 2 Manner.
- 3 Hold.
- 4 Found.
- 5 'Ou' as in 'house.'
- 6 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.
- 7 Built.
- 8 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.
- 9 On a staff *ragulé*.
- 10 Ivy.
- 11 Mangolds and turnips.
- 12 Meadows.
- 13 Drifted snow.
- 14 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.
- 15 Once.
- 16 Peel.
- 17 Arm.

<sup>18</sup> Mad.

<sup>19</sup> Latch.

<sup>20</sup> The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged in the mud, but there is a sense of slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is not expressed in 'trudged.'

<sup>21</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like an owl gone mad.

<sup>22</sup> Ladder.

<sup>23</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless person.

<sup>24</sup> Mark.

<sup>25</sup> Clutched.

<sup>26</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

<sup>27</sup> Beams.

<sup>28</sup> Wrapt ourselves.

<sup>29</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the house just beneath the ridge.

## VASTNESS.

### I.

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after  
many a vanish'd face,

Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the  
dust of a vanish'd race.

### II.

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's  
pale history runs,—

What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of  
a million million of suns?

## III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless  
violence mourn'd by the Wise,  
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular  
torrent of lies upon lies ;

## IV.

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious annals  
of army and fleet,  
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong  
cause, trumpets of victory, groans of defeat ;

## V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and  
Charity setting the martyr aflame ;  
'Thralldom who walks with the banner of Freedom,  
and recks not to ruin a realm in her name.



## VI.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of  
doubts that darken the schools ;  
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd  
up by her vassal legion of fools ;

## VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice  
and her vintage, her silk and her corn ;  
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famishing  
populace, wharves forlorn ;

## VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise ; gloom  
of the evening, Life at a close ;  
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-way with  
her flying robe and her poison'd rose ;

## IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleasure,  
a worm which writhes all day, and at night  
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings  
him back to the curse of the light ;

## X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots ;  
honest Poverty, bare to the bone ;  
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty ; Flattery gilding  
the rift in a throne ;

## XI.

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a  
jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate ;  
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the  
laurel'd graves of the Great ;

## XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no  
regrets for aught that has been,  
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless  
competence, golden mean ;

## XIII.

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy  
spites of the village spire ;  
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and  
vows that are snapt in a moment of fire ;

## XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and  
died in the doing it, flesh without mind ;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self  
died out in the love of his kind ;

## XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and  
all these old revolutions of earth ;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire—change of the  
tide—what is all of it worth ?

## XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, vary-  
ing voices of prayer ?  
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy  
with all that is fair ?

## XVII.

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our  
own corpse-coffins at last,  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in  
the deeps of a meaningless Past ?

## XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a  
moment's anger of bees in their hive?—

\*            \*            \*            \*

Peace, let it be ! for I loved him, and love him for  
ever : the dead are not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell.

THE RING.

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,

Bright in blue,

Moon of married hearts,

Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year

Bring me bliss,

Globing Honey Moons

Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times

From the night.

Young again you grow

Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,

Coming soon,

Globe again, and make

Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,

Moon, with you,

For ten thousand years

Old and new?

FATHER.

And who was he with such love-drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons of one?

MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert—his  
The words, and mine the setting. 'Air and  
Words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, 'are bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you?

FATHER.

Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your Mother's voice in yours.  
She——, why, you shiver tho' the wind is west  
With all the warmth of summer.



MIRIAM.

Well, I felt

On a sudden I know not what, a breath that past  
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was Man,  
But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen ; the veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,  
But thro' the Will of One who knows and rules—  
And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,

Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening height,  
An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link  
With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low, what is it?  
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a new link  
Breaking an old one?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not known.

MIRIAM.

And who? what other?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound?

For Naples which we only left in May?

MIRIAM.

No! father, Spain, but Hubert brings me home

With April and the swallow. Wish me joy!

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert weds in you

The heart of Love, and you the soul of Truth

In Hubert?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once

The lonely maiden-Princess of the wood,

Who meant to sleep her hundred summers out  
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now

Your fairy Prince has found you, take this ring.

MIRIAM.

‘Io t’amo’—and these diamonds—beautiful!

‘From Walter,’ and for me from you then?

FATHER.

Well,

One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.

Miriam am I not?

## FATHER.

This ring bequeath'd you by your mother, child,  
Was to be given you—such her dying wish—  
Given on the morning when you came of age  
Or on the day you married. Both the days  
Now close in one. The ring is doubly yours.  
Why do you look so gravely at the tower?

## MIRIAM.

I never saw it yet so all ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!  
And how the birds that circle round the tower  
Are cheeping to each other of their flight  
To summer lands!

FATHER.

And that has made you grave?

Fly—care not. Birds and brides must leave the  
nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.

It is not that!

FATHER.

What else?

MIRIAM.

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.

What chamber, child?

Your nurse is here?

MIRIAM.

My Mother's nurse and mine.

She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

FATHER.

What did she say?

MIRIAM.

She said, that you and I

Had been abroad for my poor health so long

She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy hair

Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine.'

FATHER.

What then? what more?

## MIRIAM.

She said—perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now so far  
Beyond the common date of death—that you,  
When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear Mother on your bracket here—  
You took me to that chamber in the tower,  
The topmost—a chest there, by which you knelt—  
And there were books and dresses—left to me,  
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she said,  
I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used  
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my hands  
As if I saw her ; then a woman came  
And caught me from my nurse. I hear her yet—  
A sound of anger like a distant storm.

## FATHER.

Garrulous old crone.



MIRIAM.

Poor nurse !

FATHER.

I bad her keep,

Like a seal'd book, all mention of the ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM.

'She too might speak to-day,' she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,

But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day !

I brought you to that chamber on your third

September birthday with your nurse, and felt  
An icy breath play on me, while I stoopt  
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM.

This very ring  
Is t'amo?

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine  
That, in the misery of my married life,  
Miriam your Mother might appear to me.  
She came to you, not me. The storm, you hear  
Far-off, is Muriel—your step-mother's voice.

MIRIAM.

Next, that you thought my Mother came to me?  
Or at my crying 'Mother?' or to find

My Mother's diamonds hidden from her there,  
Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not shown  
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.

Your Mother and step-mother—Miriam Erne  
And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins—lived  
With Muriel's mother on the down, that sees  
A thousand squares of corn and meadow, far  
As the gray deep, a landscape which your eyes  
Have many a time ranged over when a babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert yesterday,  
And from the thousand squares, one silent voice  
Came on the wind, and seem'd to say 'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

## FATHER.

And there  
I found these cousins often by the brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw the fly ;  
The girls of equal age, but one was fair,  
And one was dark, and both were beautiful.  
No voice for either spoke within my heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only doats  
On outward beauty, glancing from the one  
To the other, knew not that which pleased it most,  
The raven ringlet or the gold ; but both  
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to walk  
This Terrace—morbid, melancholy ; mine  
And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the field ;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd 'debt,'  
The brook that feeds this lakelet murmur'd 'debt,'  
And in yon arching avenue of old elms,  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober rook  
And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'

MIRIAM.

Father's fault

Visited on the children !

FATHER.

Ay, but then

A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to Rome—  
He left me wealth—and while I journey'd hence,  
And saw the world fly by me like a dream,  
And while I communed with my truest self,  
I woke to all of truest in myself,

Till, in the gleam of those mid-summer dawns,  
The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew ;  
And past and future mix'd in Heaven and made  
The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

## MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him, who left you wealth,  
Your kinsman?

## FATHER.

I had seen the man but once ;  
He loved my name not me ; and then I pass'd  
Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,  
So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
That he was nearing his own hundred, sold  
This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the ring is weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was he.

‘Why weird?’ I ask’d him ; and he said ‘The souls  
Of two repentant Lovers guard the ring ;’

Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak eyes—

‘And if you give the ring to any maid,

They still remember what it cost them here,

And bind the maid to love you by the ring ;

And if the ring were stolen from the maid,

The theft were death or madness to the thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the gift.’

And then he told their legend :

‘Long ago

Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale

Had quarrell’d, till the man repenting sent

This ring “Io t’amo” to his best beloved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that day  
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the ring,  
He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The causer of that scandal, fought and fell ;  
And she that came to part them all too late,  
And found a corpse and silence, drew the ring  
From his dead finger, wore it till her death,  
Shrined him within the temple of her heart,  
Made every moment of her after life  
A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and cried  
" I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo."

## MIRIAM.

Legend or true ? so tender should be true !  
Did *he* believe it ? did you ask him ?



FATHER.

Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren ghost  
From out the fleshless world of spirits, laugh'd :  
A hollow laughter !

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death ! But you ?

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this ring  
Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the heart  
Of Miriam ; then I bad the man engrave  
'From Walter' on the ring, and send it—wrote  
Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but he—  
Some younger hand must have engraven the ring—

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost  
Of seven and ninety winters, that he scrawl'd  
A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';  
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I meant  
For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it  
Before that other whom I loved and love.'

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster there,  
A galleried palace, or a battlefield,  
Where stood the sheaf of Peace : but—coming home—  
And on your Mother's birthday—all but yours—  
A week betwixt—and when the tower as now  
Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,  
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
Head-foremost—who were those that stood between  
The tower and that rich phantom of the tower?  
Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and like  
May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it they?

A light shot upward on them from the lake.

What sparkled there? whose hand was that? they  
stood

So close together. I am not keen of sight,

But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—

‘O Miriam! have you given your ring to her?’

O Miriam!’ Miriam reddened, Muriel clenched

The hand that wore it, till I cried again:

‘O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!’

She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was mute.

‘Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.’

Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—

She turned, and in her soft imperial way

And saying gently: ‘Muriel, by your leave,’

Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the ring,

And gave it me, who passed it down her own,

‘Io t’amo, all is well then.’ Muriel fled.

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel !

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel when you hear  
What follows ! Miriam loved me from the first,  
Not thro' the ring ; but on her marriage-morn  
This birthday, death-day, and betrothal ring,  
Laid on her table overnight, was gone ;  
And after hours of search and doubt and threats,  
And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it, ' See !—  
Found in a chink of that old moulder'd floor !'  
My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,  
As who should say ' that those who lose can find.'  
Then I and she were married for a year,  
One year without a storm, or even a cloud ;

And you my Miriam born within the year ;  
And she my Miriam dead within the year.

I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt :

‘The books, the miniature, the lace are hers,  
My ring too when she comes of age, or when  
She marries ; you—you loved me, kept your word.  
You love me still “Io t’amo.”—Muriel—no—  
She cannot love ; she loves her own hard self,  
Her firm will, her fix’d purpose. Promise me,  
Miriam not Muriel—she shall have the ring.’  
And there the light of other life, which lives  
Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,  
Gleam’d for a moment in her own on earth.  
I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss  
Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not close,  
But kept their watch upon the ring and you.  
Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor Mother!

And you, poor desolate Father, and poor me,  
The little senseless, worthless, wordless babe,  
Saved when your life was wreck'd!

FATHER.

Desolate? yes!

Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm  
Had parted from his comrade in the boat,  
And dash'd half dead on barren sands, was I.  
Nay, you were my one solace; only—you  
Were always ailing. Muriel's mother sent,  
And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came  
And saw you, shook her head, and patted yours,  
And smiled, and making with a kindly pinch  
Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—

'*That* should be fix'd,' she said ; 'your pretty bud,  
So blighted here, would flower into full health  
Among our heath and bracken. Let her come !  
And we will feed her with our mountain air,  
And send her home to you rejoicing.' No—  
We could not part. And once, when you my girl  
Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist  
Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's grave—  
By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she said,  
'Among the tombs in this damp vale of yours !  
You scorn my Mother's warning, but the child  
Is paler than before. We often walk  
In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
The mist of autumn gather from your lake,  
And shroud the tower ; and once we only saw  
Your gilded vane, a light above the mist'—  
(Our old bright bird that still is veering there

Above his four gold letters) 'and the light,'  
She said, 'was like that light'—and there she  
    paused,  
And long ; till I believing that the girl's  
Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find  
One likeness, laugh'd a little and found her two—  
'A warrior's crest above the cloud of war'—  
'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she said, 'the light  
That glimmers on the marsh and on the grave.'  
And spoke no more, but turn'd and pass'd away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
Caught by the flower that closes on the fly,  
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,  
In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
To strike it, struck ; I took, I left you there ;  
I came, I went, was happier day by day ;



For Muriel nursed you with a mother's care ;  
Till on that clear and heather-scented height  
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into bloom.  
She always came to meet me carrying you,  
And all her talk was of the babe she loved ;  
So, following her old pastime of the brook,  
She threw the fly for me ; but oftener left  
That angling to the mother. ' Muriel's health  
Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam. Strange !  
She used to shun the wailing babe, and doats  
On this of yours.' But when the matron saw  
That hinted love was only wasted bait,  
Not risen to, she was bolder. ' Ever since  
You sent the fatal ring'—I told her ' sent  
To Miriam,' ' Doubtless—ay, but ever since  
In all the world my dear one sees but you—  
In your sweet babe she finds but you—she makes

Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'

And then the tear fell, the voice broke. *Her*  
heart !

I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
That glances from the bottom of the pool,  
Strike upward thro' the shadow ; yet at last,  
Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep  
So skilled a nurse about you always—nay !  
Some half remorseful kind of pity too—  
Well ! well, you know I married Muriel Erne.

'I take thee Muriel for my wedded wife'—  
I had forgotten it was your birthday, child—  
When all at once with some electric thrill  
A cold air pass'd between us, and the hands  
Fell from each other, and were join'd again.

No second cloudless honeymoon was mine.

For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,  
She dropt the gracious mask of motherhood,  
She came no more to meet me, carrying you,  
Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,  
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring ;  
Why had I sent the ring at first to her ?  
Why had I made her love me thro' the ring,  
And then had changed ? so fickle are men—the  
best !

Not she—but now my love was hers again,  
The ring by right, she said, was hers again.  
At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,  
'That weak and watery nature love you ? No !  
" *Io t'amo, Io t'amo* " !' flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her lips

Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,  
As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow ;  
But still she made her outcry for the ring ;  
For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,  
Till I myself was madden'd with her cry,  
And even that 'Io t'amo,' those three sweet  
Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie sounds,  
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,  
A noise of falling weights that never fell,  
Weird whispers, bells that rang without a hand,  
Door-handles turn'd when none was at the door,  
And bolted doors that open'd of themselves :  
And one betwixt the dark and light had seen  
*Her*, bending by the cradle of her babe.

## MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked  
By noises in the house—and no one near—  
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand  
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face  
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,  
And I was quieted, and slept again.  
Or is it some half memory of a dream?

## FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

## MIRIAM.

And the face,  
The hand,—my Mother.

## FATHER.

Miriam, on that day

Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale—  
Mere want of gold—and still for twenty years  
Bound by the golden cord of their first love—  
Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to share  
Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler then  
Than ever you were in your cradle, moan'd,  
'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,  
I cannot go, go you.' And then she rose,  
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,  
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
I parted from her, and I went alone.  
And when the bridegroom murmur'd, 'With this  
ring,'  
I felt for what I could not find, the key,  
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.

I kept it as a sacred amulet  
About me,—gone ! and gone in that embrace !  
Then, hurrying home, I found her not in house  
Or garden—up the tower—an icy air  
Fled by me.—There, the chest was open—all  
The sacred relics tost about the floor—  
Among them Muriel lying on her face—  
I raised her, call'd her 'Muriel, Muriel wake !'  
The fatal ring lay near her ; the glazed eye  
Glared at me as in horror. Dead ! I took  
And chafed the freezing hand. A red mark ran  
All round one finger pointed straight, the rest  
Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and maybe stung  
With some remorse, had stolen, worn the ring—  
Then torn it from her finger, or as if—  
For never had I seen her show remorse—  
As if—

MIRIAM.

—those two Ghost lovers—

FATHER.

Lovers yet—

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes!

FATHER.

—but dead so long, gone up so far,  
That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd  
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,  
As we forget our wail at being born.  
As if—

MIRIAM.

a dearer ghost had—



FATHER.

—wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful eyes,  
Till from her own hand she had torn the ring  
In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself  
Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER.

Well, no more !

No bridal music this ! but fear not you !  
You have the ring she guarded ; that poor link  
With earth is broken, and has left her free,  
Except that, still drawn downward for an hour,  
Her spirit hovering by the church, where she

Was married too, may linger, till she sees  
Her maiden coming like a Queen, who leaves  
Some colder province in the North to gain  
Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
Clash welcome—linger, till her own, the babe  
She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,  
Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd with flowers,  
Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child and go.

## FORLORN.

### I.

‘ HE is fled—I wish him dead—  
He that wrought my ruin—  
O the flattery and the craft  
Which were my undoing . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the storms are blowing.

### II.

‘ Who was witness of the crime?  
Who shall now reveal it?

He is fled, or he is dead,  
    Marriage will conceal it . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
    While the gloom is growing.'

## III.

Catherine, Catherine, in the night  
    What is this you're dreaming?  
There is laughter down in Hell  
    At your simple scheming . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
    When the ghosts are fleeing.

## IV.

You to place a hand in his  
    Like an honest woman's,

You that lie with wasted lungs  
Waiting for your summons . . .  
In the night, O the night !  
O the deathwatch beating !

## v.

There will come a witness soon  
Hard to be confuted,  
All the world will hear a voice  
Scream you are polluted . . .  
In the night ! O the night,  
When the owls are wailing !

## vi.

Shame and marriage, Shame and marriage,  
Fright and foul dissembling,

Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
Tower and altar trembling . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the mind is failing !

## VII.

Mother, dare you kill your child ?  
How your hand is shaking !  
Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
What is this you're taking ? . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the house is sleeping.

## VIII.

Dreadful ! has it come to this,  
O unhappy creature ?

You that would not tread on a worm

For your gentle nature . . .

In the night, O the night,

O the night of weeping !

## IX.

Murder would not veil your sin,

Marriage will not hide it,

Earth and Hell will brand your name,

Wretch you must abide it . . .

In the night, O the night,

Long before the dawning.

## X.

Up, get up, and tell him all,

Tell him you were lying !

Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
You that know you're dying . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the grave is yawning.

## XI.

No—you will not die before,  
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger ;  
You will live till *that* is born,  
Then a little longer . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the Fiend is prowling.

## XII.

Death and marriage, Death and marriage !  
Funeral hearses rolling !



Black with bridal favours mixt !  
Bridal bells with tolling ! . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the wolves are howling.

## XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,  
Tell him now or never !  
Tell him all before you die,  
Lest you die for ever . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Where there's no forgetting.

## XIV.

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
All her tale of sadness,

Blister'd every word with tears,  
And eased her heart of madness . . .  
In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY.

### THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

#### I.

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what is it that  
you fear?

Is he sick your mate like mine? have you lost  
him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his watch beside  
the mere,

And flies above the leper's hut, where lives the  
living-dead.

## II.

Come back, nor let me know it ! would he live and  
die alone ?

And has he not forgiven me yet, his over-jealous  
bride,

Who am, and was, and will be his, his own and only  
own,

To share his living death with him, die with him  
side by side ?

## III.

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,

Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and wears the  
leper's weed ?

The door is open. He ! is he standing at the door,  
My soldier of the Cross ? it is he and he indeed !

## IV.

My roses—will he take them *now*—mine, his—  
from off the tree

We planted both together, happy in our marriage  
morn?

O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought Thy fight  
for Thee,

And Thou hast made him leper to compass him  
with scorn—

## V.

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the coward and  
the base,

And set a crueller mark than Cain's on him, the  
good and brave!

He sees me, waves me from him. I will front him  
face to face.

You need not wave me from you. I would leap  
into your grave.

\* \* \* \*

## VI.

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the conquer-  
ing sword,

The roses that you cast aside—once more I  
bring you these.

No nearer? do you scorn me when you tell me O  
my lord,

You would not mar the beauty of your bride  
with your disease.

## VII.

You say your body is so foul—then here I stand  
apart,

Who yearn to lay my loving head upon your  
leprous breast.

The leper plague may scale my skin but never taint  
my heart ;

Your body is not foul to me, and body is foul  
at best.

## VIII.

I loved you first when young and fair, but now I  
love you most ;

The fairest flesh at last is filth on which the  
worm will feast ;

This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy human  
ghost,

This house with all its hateful needs no cleaner  
than the beast,

## IX.

This coarse diseaseful creature which in Eden was  
divine,

This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city of sewers,  
This wall of solid flesh that comes between your  
soul and mine,

Will vanish and give place to the beauty that  
endures,

## X.

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual height,  
When we shall stand transfigured, like Christ on  
Hermon hill,

And moving each to music, soul in soul and light  
in light,

Shall flash thro' one another in a moment as we  
will.



## XI.

Foul! foul! the word was yours not mine, I worship  
that right hand  
Which fell'd the foes before you as the woodman  
fells the wood,  
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back the sun  
of Holy land,  
And clove the Moslem crescent moon, and  
changed it into blood.

## XII.

And once I worshipt all too well this creature of  
decay,  
For Age will chink the face, and Death will  
freeze the supplest limbs—  
Yet you in your mid manhood—O the grief when  
yesterday

They bore the Cross before you to the chant of  
funeral hymns.

## XIII.

‘Libera me, Domine!’ you sang the Psalm, and  
when

The Priest pronounced you dead, and flung the  
mould upon your feet,

A beauty came upon your face, not that of living  
men,

But seen upon the silent brow when life has  
ceased to beat.

## XIV.

‘Libera nos, Domine’—you knew not one was  
there

Who saw you kneel beside your bier, and weep-  
ing scarce could see ;

May I come a little nearer, I that heard, and  
changed the prayer

And sang the married 'nos' for the solitary 'me.'

## XV.

*My* beauty marred by you? by you! so be it. All  
is well

If I lose it and myself in the higher beauty,  
yours.

*My* beauty lured that falcon from his eyry on the fell,  
Who never caught one gleam of the beauty  
which endures—

## XVI.

The Count who sought to snap the bond that link'd  
us life to life,

Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric loves'—a little  
nearer still—

He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves, your Ulric  
woos my wife'—

A lie by which he thought he could subdue me  
to his will.

## XVII.

I knew that you were near me when I let him kiss  
my brow ;

Well, he kiss'd me on the lips, I was jealous,  
anger'd, vain,

And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are you  
jealous of me now ?

Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave you pain.

## XVIII.

You never once accused me, but I wept alone, and  
sigh'd

In the winter of the Present for the summer of  
the Past ;  
That icy winter silence—how it froze you from  
your bride,  
Tho' I made one barren effort to break it at  
the last.

## XIX.

I brought you, you remember, these roses, when I  
knew  
You were parting for the war, and you took them  
tho' you frown'd ;  
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them. All at  
once the trumpet blew,  
And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and you hurl'd  
them to the ground.

## XX.

You parted for the Holy War without a word to me,  
And clear myself unask'd—not I. My nature was  
too proud.

And him I saw but once again, and far away was he,  
When I was praying in a storm—the crash was  
long and loud—

## XXI.

That God would ever slant His bolt from falling  
on your head—

Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming down  
the fell—

I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from Heaven  
had dash'd him dead,  
And sent him charr'd and blasted to the death-  
less fire of Hell.

## XXII.

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented and  
repent,

And trust myself forgiven by the God to whom  
I kneel.

A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be content  
Till I be leper like yourself, my love, from head  
to heel.

## XXIII.

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would slight our  
marriage oath :

I held you at that moment even dearer than  
before ;

Now God has made you leper in His loving care  
for both,

That we might cling together, never doubt each  
other more.

## XXIV.

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead, has join'd  
our hands of old ;

If man and wife be but one flesh, let mine be  
leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if beneath the  
mould ;

If you be dead, then I am dead, who only live  
for you.

## XXV.

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be follow'd by  
the Moon ?

The leech forsake the dying bed for terror of  
his life ?



The shadow leave the Substance in the brooding  
light of noon ?

Or if *I* had been the leper would you have left  
the wife ?

## XXVI.

Not take them ? Still you wave me off—poor roses  
—must I go—

I have worn them year by year—from the bush  
we both had set—

What ? fling them to you ?—well—that were hardly  
gracious. No !

Your plague but passes by the touch. A little  
nearer yet !

## XXVII.

There, there ! he buried you, the Priest ; the Priest  
is not to blame,

He joins us once again, to his either office true :  
I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss me. In  
the name

Of the everlasting God, I will live and die with  
you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper

singing the psalm 'Libera me domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation.

With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

## TO ULYSSES.

### I.

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe of ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan,

### II.

To you that bask below the Line,  
I soaking here in winter wet—  
The century's three strong eights have met  
To drag me down to seventy-nine

## III.

In summer if I reach my day—  
    To you, yet young, who breathe the balm  
    Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV.

I tolerant of the colder time,  
    Who love the winter woods, to trace  
    On paler heavens the branching grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

## V.

And see my cedar green, and there  
    My giant ilex keeping leaf  
    When frost is keen and days are brief—  
Or marvel how in English air

## VI.

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

## VII.

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>1</sup>  
A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

## VIII.

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But chaining fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX.

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>2</sup> your Arabian sands ;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

## X.

The wealth of tropic bower and brake ;  
Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>3</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles ;  
Your wonder of the boiling lake ;<sup>4</sup>

## XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>5</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>6</sup> the step ; your Pontic coast ;  
Crag-cloister ;<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Ghost ;<sup>8</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>9</sup> Karnac,<sup>10</sup> and all the rest.



XII.

Thro' which I follow'd line by line

Your leading hand, and came, my friend,

To prize your various book, and send

A gift of slenderer value, mine.

## NOTES TO ULYSSES.

‘Ulysses,’ the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing either this volume or my poem.

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, ‘I wish I had your trees.’

<sup>2</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>3</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>5</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>6</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>7</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>8</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>9</sup> The three cities.

<sup>10</sup> Travels in Egypt.

TO MARY BOYLE.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I.

‘SPRING-FLOWERS’! While you still delay to take  
Your leave of Town,  
Our elmtree’s ruddy-hearted blossom-flake  
Is fluttering down.

II.

Be truer to your promise. There! I heard  
One cuckoo call.  
Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
Nor wait, till all

## III.

Our vernal bloom from every vale and plain  
    And garden pass,  
And all the gold from each laburnum chain  
    Drop to the grass.

## IV.

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,  
    Dead with the dead?  
For ere she left us, when we met, you prest  
    My hand, and said

## V.

‘I come with your spring-flowers.’ You came not,  
    friend ;  
    My birds would sing,  
You heard not. Take then this spring-flower I send,  
    This song of spring,

## VI.

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own rhyme

By mine old self,

As I shall be forgotten by old Time,

Laid on the shelf—

## VII.

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whitening sloe

And kingcup blaze,

And more than half a hundred years ago,

In rick-fire days,

## VIII.

When Dives loathed the times, and paced his land

In fear of worse,

And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand

Fill with *his* purse.

## IX.

For lowly minds were madden'd to the height  
By tonguester tricks,  
And once—I well remember that red night  
When thirty ricks,

## X.

All flaming, made an English homestead Hell—  
These hands of mine  
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well  
Along the line,

## XI.

When this bare dome had not begun to gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,  
His girl of girls ;

## XII.

And you, that now are lonely, and with Grief  
    Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief  
    In change of place.

## XIII.

What use to brood? this life of mingled pains  
    And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains  
    The Mystery.

## XIV.

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the wife,  
    For ever gone.  
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert life  
    Without the one.

## XV.

The silver year should cease to mourn and sigh—

Not long to wait—

So close are we, dear Mary, you and I

To that dim gate.

## XVI

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet makes

Or many or few,

He rests content, if his young music wakes

A wish in you

## XVII.

To change our dark Queen-city, all her realm

Of sound and smoke,

For his clear heaven, and these few lanes of elm

And whispering oak.



## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING.

### I.

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the bee :  
Come Spring, for now from all the dripping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself away,  
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the day.  
She comes ! The loosen'd rivulets run ;  
The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair ;  
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,

Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her bare  
To breaths of balmier air ;

## 11.

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,  
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,  
Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,  
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,  
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,  
Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,  
And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks.  
Come Spring ! She comes on waste and wood,  
On farm and field : but enter also here,  
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,  
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
Lodge with me all the year !

## III.

Once more a downy drift against the brakes,  
Self-darken'd in the sky, descending slow !  
But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes  
Yon blanching apricot like snow in snow.  
These will thine eyes not brook in forest-paths,  
On their perpetual pine, nor round the beech ;  
They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,  
Solved in the tender blushes of the peach ;  
They lose themselves and die  
On that new life that gems the hawthorn line ;  
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,  
And out once more in varnish'd glory shine  
Thy stars of celandine.

## IV.

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven lours,  
    But in the tearful splendour of her smiles  
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers  
    Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.  
Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,  
    A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand ;  
Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,  
    I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.  
Come, Spring ! She comes, and Earth is glad  
    To roll her North below thy deepening dome,  
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,  
    And these low bushes dip their twigs in foam,  
    Make all true hearths thy home.

## V.

Across my garden ! and the thicket stirs,  
The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,  
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,  
The starling claps his tiny castanets.  
Still round her forehead wheels the woodland dove,  
And scatters on her throat the sparks of  
dew,  
The kingcup fills her footprint, and above  
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.  
Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing green,  
Flies back in fragrant breezes to display  
A tunic white as May !

## VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring you balm,  
For on a tropic mountain was I born,  
While some dark dweller by the coco-palm  
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with airy morn ;  
From under rose a muffled moan of floods ;  
I sat beneath a solitude of snow ;  
There no one came, the turf was fresh, the woods  
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales below.  
I saw beyond their silent tops  
The steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry plains  
About a land of canes ;

## VII.

‘Then from my vapour-girdle soaring forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of the birds,  
And drank the dews and drizzle of the North,  
That I might mix with men, and hear their words  
On pathway’d plains ; for—while my hand exults  
Within the bloodless heart of lowly flowers  
To work old laws of Love to fresh results,  
Thro’ manifold effect of simple powers—  
I too would teach the man  
Beyond the darker hour to see the bright,  
That his fresh life may close as it began,  
The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
Narrowing the bounds of night.’

## VIII.

So wed thee with my soul, that I may mark  
The coming year's great good and varied ills,  
And new developments, whatever spark  
Be struck from out the clash of warring wills ;  
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,  
The smoke of war's volcano burst again  
From hoary deeps that belt the changeful West,  
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of men ;  
Or should those fail, that hold the helm,  
While the long day of knowledge grows and  
warms,  
And in the heart of this most ancient realm  
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms  
Sounding 'To arms ! to arms !'



## IX.

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn

Who reads thy gradual process, Holy Spring.

Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,

And in their time thy warblers rise on wing.

How surely glidest thou from March to May,

And changest, breathing it, the sullen wind,

Thy scope of operation, day by day,

Larger and fuller, like the human mind !

Thy warmths from bud to bud

Accomplish that blind model in the seed,

And men have hopes, which race the restless blood,

That after many changes may succeed

Life, which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

### I.

O YOUNG Mariner,  
You from the haven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician  
With eyes of wonder,  
*I* am Merlin,  
And *I* am dying,  
*I* am Merlin  
Who follow The Gleam.

## II.

Mighty the Wizard  
Who found me at sunrise  
Sleeping, and woke me  
And learn'd me Magic !  
Great the Master,  
And sweet the Magic,  
When over the valley,  
In early summers,  
Over the mountain,  
On human faces,  
And all around me,  
Moving to melody,  
Floated The Gleam.

## III.

Once at the croak of a Raven who  
    crost it,  
A barbarous people,  
Blind to the magic,  
And deaf to the melody,  
Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
A demon vext me,  
The light retreated,  
The landskip darken'd,  
The melody deaden'd,  
The Master whisper'd  
'Follow The Gleam.'

## IV.

Then to the melody,  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland,  
Gnome of the cavern,  
Griffin and Giant,  
And dancing of Fairies  
In desolate hollows,  
And wraiths of the mountain,  
And rolling of dragons  
By warble of water,  
Or cataract music  
Of falling torrents,  
Flitted The Gleam.

## v.

Down from the mountain  
And over the level,  
And streaming and shining on  
Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Horses and oxen,  
Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ruddy faces  
Of lowly labour,  
Slided The Gleam.—

## VI.

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the king ;  
Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the Tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested The Gleam.

## VII.

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot ;  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die ;  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry  
    glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening



Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a melody  
Yearningly tender,  
Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with The Gleam.

## VIII.

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world ;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon

Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom ;  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came——  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam.

## IX.

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight !  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE.

‘ I read Hayley’s Life of Romney the other day— Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter ; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life ! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that “marriage spoilt an artist” almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life ; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney’s pictures ! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.’ (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.)

‘ BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this ’

Who are you ? What ! the Lady Hamilton ?

Good, I am never weary painting you.  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,  
Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—  
Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail  
To conjure and concentrate into form  
And colour all you are, the fault is less  
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet  
Could make pure light live on the canvas? Art!  
Why should I so disrelish that short word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills! so hot,  
So fever'd! never colt would more delight  
To roll himself in meadow grass than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of your own will  
To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?  
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal church—

O yes! I hired you for a season there,  
And then we parted; but you look so kind  
That you will not deny my sultry throat  
One draught of icy water. There—you spill  
The drops upon my forehead. Your hand shakes.  
I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are they tears?  
For me—they do me too much grace—for me?  
O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes  
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,—words,  
Wild babble. I have stumbled back again  
Into the common day, the sounder self.  
God stay me there, if only for your sake,  
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife  
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,  
That wife and children drag an Artist down !  
This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven of Art,  
And lured me from the household fire on earth.  
To you my days have been a life-long lie,  
Grafted on half a truth, and tho' you say  
'Take comfort, you have won the Painter's fame ;  
The best in me that sees the worst in me,  
And groans to see it, finds no comfort there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël, Titian—no  
Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
Wrong there ! The painter's fame? but mine, that  
grew

Blown into glittering by the popular breath,  
May float awhile beneath the sun, may roll  
The rainbow hues of heaven about it—

There !

The colour'd bubble bursts above the abyss  
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame with me  
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen  
To flame along another dreary day.  
Your hand. How bright you keep your marriage-  
ring!  
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then  
Bred this black mood? or am I conscious, more  
Than other Masters, of the chasm between  
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom of Age  
And suffering cloud the height I stand upon



Even from myself? stand? stood . . . no more.

And yet

The world would lose, if such a wife as you

Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave

One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim

On your obedience, and my strongest wish

Falls flat before your least unwillingness.

Still would you—if it please you—sit to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear summer noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to foot

With your own shadow in the placid lake,

You claspt our infant daughter, heart to heart.

I had been among the hills, and brought you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this you twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,

Mother and child. A sound from far away,

No louder than a bee among the flowers,

A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.  
You still'd it for the moment with a song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood  
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons ! if I can, I will.  
You should have been—I might have made you once,  
Had I but known you as I know you now—  
The true Alcestis of the time. Your song—  
Sit, listen ! I remember it, a proof  
That I—even I—at times remember'd *you*.

‘Beat upon mine, little heart ! beat, beat !  
Beat upon mine ! you are mine, my sweet !  
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your feet,  
My sweet.’

Less profile ! turn to me—three-quarter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss!  
For I give you this, and I give you this!  
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a kiss!  
Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—

'Father and Mother will watch you grow'—  
You watch'd not I, she did not grow, she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you grow,  
And gather the roses whenever they blow,  
And find the white heather wherever you go,  
My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only grows in heaven  
With Milton's amaranth. There, there, there! a  
child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle tools,  
Stamp't into dust—tremulous, all awry,

Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool,—  
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that harlot-like  
Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-like,  
Who love her still, and whimper, impotent  
To win her back before I die—and then—  
Then, in the loud world's bastard judgment-day,  
One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,  
Who feel no touch of my temptation, more  
More than all the myriad lies, that blacken round  
The corpse of every man that gains a name ;  
'This model husband, this fine Artist'! Fool,  
What matters? Six foot deep of burial mould  
Will dull their comments! Ay, but when the shout  
Of His descending peals from Heaven, and throbs  
Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He* should ask  
'Why left you wife and children? for my sake,  
According to my word?' and I replied

'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would sound so  
mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of Hell  
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussulman  
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the sea,  
Would turn, and glare at me, and point and jeer,  
And gibber at the worm, who, living, made  
The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost  
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again !

The coals of fire you heap upon my head  
Have crazed me. Someone knocking there with-  
out ?

No ! Will my Indian brother come ? to find  
Me or my coffin ? Should I know the man ?  
This worn-out Reason dying in her house

May leave the windows blinded, and if so,  
Bid him farewell for me, and tell him—

Hope !

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper ' Hope.'  
"The miserable have no medicine  
But only Hope!" He said it . . . in the play.  
His crime was of the senses ; of the mind  
Mine ; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—

O let me lean my head upon your breast.  
' Beat little heart ' on this fool brain of mine.  
I once had friends—and many—none like you.  
I love you more than when we married. Hope !  
O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—  
For you forgive me, you are sure of that—  
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

## PARNASSUS.

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

### I.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over the sacred  
fountain?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised to the  
heights of the mountain,

And over the flight of the Ages! O Goddesses,  
help me up thither!

Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar, but mine  
would not wither.

Steep is the mountain, but you, you will help me  
to overcome it,

And stand with my head in the zenith, and roll my  
voice from the summit,

Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth and her  
listening nations,

And mixt with the great Sphere-music of stars and  
of constellations.

## II.

What be those two shapes high over the sacred  
fountain,

Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all the  
mountain?



On those two known peaks they stand ever spread-  
ing and heightening ;

Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by more than  
lightning !

Look, in their deep double shadow the crown'd  
ones all disappearing !

Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for a  
deathless hearing !

'Sounding for ever and ever ?' pass on ! the sight  
confuses—

These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible Muses !

### III.

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure  
Pierian altar,

Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer  
greatly care?

Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him  
would not falter;

Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer  
there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a  
man,

And the man said 'Am I your debtor?'

And the Lord—'Not yet : but make it as clean as  
you can,

And then I will let you a better.'

I.

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain,  
or a fable,

Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of  
morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in  
my stable,  
Youth and Health, and birth and wealth, and  
choice of women and of wines?

## II.

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save  
breaking my bones on the rack?  
Would I had past in the morning that looks so  
bright from afar!

## OLD AGE.

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was  
linkt with thee eighty years back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that  
hangs on a star.

## I.

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer  
than their own,

I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the  
royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from  
the throne,

Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy  
Province of the brute.

## II.

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at  
a field in the Past,

Where I sank with the body at times in the  
sloughs of a low desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is  
quiet at last

As he stands on the heights of his life with a  
glimpse of a height that is higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew  
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,

Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?  
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells

Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,  
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a  
boy

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath  
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of Birth,  
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,

Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?  
O dying words, can Music make you live

Far—far—away?



## POLITICS.

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your Craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain,  
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry 'Slow,'  
But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
Down hill 'Too-quick' the chain.

## BEAUTIFUL CITY.

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of  
European confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek for the rights  
of an equal humanity,  
How often your Re-volution has proven but  
E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of  
a civic insanity!

## THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE.

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,

When I was in my June, you in your May,

Two words, 'My Rose' set all your face aglow,

And now that I am white, and you are gray,

That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,

Blooms in the Past, but close to me to-day

As this red rose, which on our terrace here

Glow in the blue of fifty miles away.

## THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe

You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.

And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show

In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

## ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMI- NATE MANNER.

WHILE man and woman still are incomplete,

I prize that soul where man and woman meet,

Which types all Nature's male and female plan,

But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE  
ENGLISH.

You make our faults too gross, and thence maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears be vain !  
At times the small black fly upon the pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

## THE SNOWDROP.

MANY, many welcomes  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes  
February fair-maid !

## THE THROSTLE.

‘SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.

I know it, I know it, I know it.

Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,’

Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.

Last year you sang it as gladly.

‘New, new, new, new’! Is it then *so* new

That you should carol so madly?

‘Love again, song again, nest again, young again’

Never a prophet so crazy!

And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,

See, there is hardly a daisy.

‘ Here again, here, here, here, happy year ’ !

O warble unhidden, unbidden !

Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,

And all the winters are hidden.



## THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,  
    Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
    Living gold ;

Summer-rich  
    Then ; and then  
Autumn-changed,  
Soberer-hued  
    Gold again.

All his leaves

Fall'n at length,

Look, he stands,

Trunk and bough,

Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM.

W. G. WARD.

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I shall not find,  
Whose Faith and Work were bells of full accord,  
My friend, the most unworldly of mankind,  
Most generous of all Ultramontanes, Ward,  
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind with mind,  
How loyal in the following of thy Lord!

## CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,

And one clear call for me !

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark !

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crost the bar.

THE END

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